



TELEMEDICINE REDUCES RURAL HEALTH DISPARITIES

UnitedHealth REPORT URGES MORE BROADBAND CONNECTIVITY

Fifty million Americans live in rural areas. They face:

- Higher levels of chronic illnesses, like cardiovascular disease and diabetes
- Have fewer than half the number of primary care physicians per 100,000 people than in urban areas
- On average, travel about 60 miles for specialty care – compared to only 6% of urban patients who do so

However, increased use of telemedicine could help reduce the disparities between rural healthcare and the healthcare provided in urban and suburban areas. Types of telemedicine today include:

- Transmission of data or images for analysis – increasingly used by dermatologists, radiologists and emergency medical personnel
- Consultations between patients and providers – commonly conducted over the Internet through the use of web cams
- Remote monitoring – making it possible to monitor a patient's health without an office visit
- Telepharmacy, which helps patients receive medications and medication counseling – ultimately improving medication compliance



In order to close the healthcare gap, this report recommends:

- Expanding broadband connectivity to enable growth of telemedicine adoption
- Encouraging physicians to incorporate telemedicine into their practices
- Reducing regulatory barriers to telemedicine use
- Raising patient comfort levels with telemedicine technology and encouraging its use in rural care models

Currently, legislation is pending in the Colorado General Assembly that responds to the development of new technologies in the wireless industry – like telemedicine. House Bill 1059 will open the door for additional investment into our economy. This bill is intended to bring Colorado in line with other states – which recognize that tax policy changes can have a dramatically positive impact on attracting investment, preserving and expanding high-tech jobs, and enhancing Colorado's ability to compete in a 21st century global economy.

Passage of HB 1059 will encourage investment in telemedicine technologies, which will reduce rural health disparities.

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